

# MINUTES

## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS INVENTORY & MONITORING NETWORK TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

### Conference Call

9:00-10:00am MT, May 16, 2005

#### Members Participating:

Dan Licht (lead) – Network I&M Coordinator  
Andy Banta – Fort Union Trading Post NHS  
John Moeykens - Knife River Indian Villages NHS  
Bob Manasek – Scotts Bluff NM  
Penny Knuckles – Theodore Roosevelt NP  
Dan Roddy – Wind Cave NP  
Carmen Thomson –Regional I&M Coordinator  
Chad Prosser – Northern Great Plains EPMT

#### Members Absent:

Ruthann Knudson – Agate Fossils Beds NM  
Brian Kenner – Badlands NP  
Jim Cheatham – Devils Tower NM  
vacant – Fort Laramie NHS  
Rene Ohms – Jewel Cave NM  
Wayne Werkmeister – Missouri NRR  
Eric Nelson – Mt. Rushmore NMEM  
Stuart Schneider (acting) – Niobrara NSR  
Cody Wienk – Northern Great Plains Fire Effects

#### Also in Attendance:

none

#### Conference Call Purpose and Background

The purpose of the call was to update all Technical Committee members on the status of the I&M Program with special emphasis on office location issues and the use of FY05 funds to acquire a vehicle. Licht sent out an email to Technical Committee members on May 6 in regards to the call. However, the necessary information did not get to Stuart Schneider (acting NIOB rep) in time to join the call.

#### Call Minutes

Licht stated that the FY05 budget approved by Technical Committee members in the fall of 2004 and in February of 2005 included 3 summer biological technicians. However,

the I&M Program was only able to recruit 2 people for the summer due to limited applicants (perhaps due in part to the announcements being posted late in the summer recruiting season). Licht stated that the limited office space at Mount Rushmore was becoming more of an impediment and it would have been a challenge to house a third person even if additional applicants were available. He therefore recommended that the savings from not hiring a third person (about \$10k)—along with deferring the acquisition of historic satellite imagery and deferring hiring an administrative assistant until FY06—be used to obligate funds for a vehicle. Specifically, he recommended obligating about \$28k in FY05 funds to purchase a 2006 Ford Escape Hybrid SUV (it's too late in the calendar year to purchase 2005 models through GSA). After some discussion Licht asked if there were any objections and there were not. He said he would run the proposal by the Network Board of Directors.

Licht stated that he had recently talked to Jack Butler of the Forest Service in regards to co-locating the I&M Program with the Forest Service in their new building in Rapid City. Although Butler is still willing to consider co-location, Licht stated that he sensed that Butler was getting more concerned about having adequate space for both programs. A floor plan that Butler provided Licht allocates office space for 7 NPS folks (including Amy Symstad of USGS-BRD) with 3 additional spaces left vacant. Licht feels that the I&M Program will need at least 8 fulltime spaces and possibly 10 which concerns Butler because his program may need the vacant spaces in the future (the current design allows seasonal field crews to use warehouse space). The current understanding between Licht and Butler is that if the NPS did rent the space it would be under a long-term agreement with annual renewals which means that either agency could opt out should conditions warrant it.

Licht raised the possibility of buying a modular office and locating it at Mount Rushmore. He stated that the advantage of such an approach is that after the initial acquisition there would be no annual rental payments, plus there would be more long-term certainty in such an arrangement and potentially room for growth. He stated that the previous MORU Superintendent was supportive of that, but he has been unable to arrange a meeting with Gerard Baker to discuss such an arrangement. Concerns were raised about how much stability there would actually be at the park in light of changing park priorities and leadership. Licht said he would contact Baker to discuss. The idea of splitting the I&M Program (if necessary) between the Forest Service building and Mount Rushmore was discussed. Licht said he would keep that in mind and discuss it with Baker as well.

The table below summarizes the most viable options at this time and the major pros and cons of each as discussed in the conference call (a "+" means a pro, a "0" means neutral, and a "-" means a con). (The table is an oversimplification however it does give a coarse comparison, e.g., a modular office may have to be replaced in about 15 years) Licht stated that with the exception of the renting of commercial space, there will probably still be a need for an interim office location.

Option	Cost	Room for Growth	Logistics/ commute	Coordination/ Collaboration	Time to Occupancy
Locate all I&M Program with Forest Service	\$30k annually	No	~ 5 miles	+	Fall 06
Some I&M Program with Forest Service and some at MORU	\$30k annually	Limited	~ 5 to 25 miles	0	Fall 06
Buy modular office at MORU	\$80k one-time	Yes	~ 25 miles	0	Spring 06
Rent commercial space in Rapid City	\$30k annually	Yes	~ 0-5 miles	-	Immediate

Licht briefly updated everyone on the NPSpecies certification process, and the upcoming aquatic field work by Nels Troelstrup and the plant field work by Amy Symstad. Licht encouraged everyone to respond as quickly as possible to Marcia Wilson's request for review of the NPSpecies data.

### **Followup**

Knudson called Licht shortly after the conference call. She stated that she felt that a location in Rapid City was better than Mount Rushmore in part because of the logistics and shorter commute for I&M Program staff. She supported the use of FY05 funds to acquire a vehicle.

Licht talked to Kenner shortly after the conference call. He too supported the use of FY05 funds to acquire a vehicle.

Licht talked to Gerard Baker. He said he was supportive of placing a modular office at Mount Rushmore NMEM but he needed to discuss with the Regional Director in light of the RD's recent comments about wanting no new structures at the park.

**Drafted by:** Dan Licht

**Drafted on:** 5/18/2005

**Finalized by:** Dan Licht

**Finalized on:** 5/27/2005